Creative Persons, Creative Subjects

Keywords: subjectivity / creativity / New Zealand designer fashion industry / tertiary education

Abstract

>   *What is the relationship between the 'person' and the 'subject'? This paper uses the notion of subjectification to explore how the formation of creative persons, their bodily and mental attributes and capacities, takes place in a distinct instituted cultural setting – in this case the New Zealand fashion design school. Creativity has lately become a very desirable attribute, an aptitude that contributes to an individual's identity and allows them to conduct themselves as a particular sort of person. The paper draws on interviews with fashion students to investigate the practical means by which this category of creativity is connected up with individual subjects.*

Introduction

In November 2007 New Zealand fashion designer Doris du Pont announced she was quitting the industry after more than two decades producing clothes for 'funky independently minded' women 'who want to stand out in the crowd'[i]. Du Pont said her reasons included the shift of the manufacturing industry offshore, the loss of skills in the New Zealand workforce and the growing prevalence of an unsustainable culture predicated on purchasing 'stuff'. Doris doesn't make stuff she says, she makes 'things'. She wants to retain the element of individual expression in her clothes and doesn't want to look like the rest of the world, but 'the price of being different is extinction'. Du Pont was reported as 'making the fabric of our nation'. But she can no longer make money out of New Zealand originals and refuses to follow the exodus of manufacturing to China because she says that would be like removing a link out of the chain. With 20 percent of New Zealand garment factories shutting down over the last 4 years she fears there will be a lack of young 'craftsmen and women' coming into the manufacturing industry, and a lack of factories in which they can practise their skills.

This story of an entrepreneurial woman's struggle to resist globalisation and keep her business afloat amid the challenges of a restructured garment industry and changing global commodity flows has become a familiar one in New Zealand, although it is the winners rather than the quitters that usually get the media coverage. Du Pont's narrative draws on the government-

sponsored 'Buy Kiwi Made' campaign that encourages domestic manufacture. Other versions of the globalisation story feature alternate political ideologies, also supported by government programmes. What these reports on the Designer Fashion Industry have in common is that they all engage in one way or another with the discourse about a knowledge-based, creative economy in which value 'hinge(s) on the ideas, knowledge and expertise of the elite designers who embed in clothing those qualities that generate consumer desire' (Weller, 2003, 116). However, although designer fashion has a high profile in narratives about economic nationalism, state officials regard it as a 'loss-leader to market' (Sotheran, 2006). According to the director of the Creative Sector for New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, the real economic transformative potential for New Zealand lies with exploiting new technologies for producing wool. This is the context for research into a 'creativity explosion' (Osborne, 2003) in New Zealand tertiary education. Increasing numbers of students are enrolling in fashion design degree courses. Why are such large numbers of young New Zealand women choosing to subject themselves to such a precarious existence in a globalising creative economy? This paper draws on sociological ways of thinking about the affective dimensions of reflexive self-definition in the face of such apparently inexorable global processes.

Firstly what do I mean by a 'creativity explosion'? In the early 1990s, the numbers of creative students in tertiary institutions began to burgeon. Between 1991 and 1995 enrolments in tertiary 'visual arts' courses, broadly defined as design, craft and fine arts, increased by at least one hundred and twenty–five percent (McDermott Miller, 1998, 49). By 1997 there were 2145 students enrolled and by 2003, this number had increased to over seventeen thousand (Scott, 2003). At this point the Ministry of Education began to statistically identify the field of study as 'Creative Arts'. Between 2001 and 2004, enrolments in Creative Arts continued to grow by more than thirty percent, much higher than the overall growth rate in tertiary participation. A qualifications analysis by Textiles New Zealand and the Tertiary Education Commission, aimed at helping the Textile Carpet Footwear and Apparel (TCFA) sector make a successful transition to a lower tariff environment (TNZ & TEC, 2005), showed over two and a half thousand students enrolled in textile and apparel–related degree programmes in 2004, up from 1663 in 2002. To the consternation of TCFA representatives, all but one of these programmes focused on teaching fashion design. To put this into the context of the New Zealand Designer Fashion Industry, we are talking about 'a marginal industry. Over 70 percent of firms employing only one or two people and only two other celebrity designers claim exports of more than $2.5 million' (Lewis, Larner, & Le Heron, 2007, 9).

This paper originated from research about how fashion students are learning to labour for the creative economy. The research was concerned with the cultural constitution of creative subjects, particularly the constitution of differential creative subjectivities in the service of capital. Critical cultural theorists are concerned about this new 'creative proletariat' (Arvidsson, 2007), 'young, multi-skilled, flexible, psychologically resilient, independent, single, unattached to a particular location' (Ellmeier, 2003, 3), who jump 'at every opportunity there is to be had in the field of art, music or the media' (Marie-Luise Angerer, cited in Ellmeier, 2003, 9). The creative worker is thought to be programmed with a new work ethic, needing to realize their passions, uncover personal talent, take risks and spend long hours networking. How are these persons made 'subject to' or 'prone to' take up the goals of a creative economy?

> If young people know of no other way of working than frenetic networking, self-exploitation and the maximization of talent and creativity as inner resources, expressions of the self (i.e. self-expression), then maybe it is the job of the sociologist to examine the discursive means by which these 'inner qualities' are new forms of disciplining, new regimes of power all the more effective because they are connected with freedom and self-realization [...] What is it to 'be' creative? How is talent perceived and mobilized as a strategy for individual success? (McRobbie, 2002, 104)

Creative work is regarded as a new, affective type of labour, 'a kind of fun that takes a lot of effort' (Himanen, 2001, 19) like the so–called 'hacker ethic' with which it shares many ideological points of contact (Wark, 2006). These new forms of work are straining the analytical categories that used to apply to an industrial economy and are generating new theories about 'immaterial labor, affective labor, free labor, and precarious labor', as noted by the *International Journal of Cultural Studies* in a call for a forthcoming special issue on 'co-creative labor'.[ii] Indeed as the journal editors ask, 'are these emerging phenomena best understood as a form of labor?' and '[c]an this phenomenon be explained as the exploitative extraction of surplus value from the work of media consumers, or is something else potentially more profound and challenging playing out here?'

The fact that large numbers of individuals aspiring to be creative were turning up exactly in place, at the right time (Hall, 1996, 12) to grow a creative economy could be an indication of

what geographer Nigel Thrift regards as an important 'shift taking place in the fabric of capitalism' (Thrift, 2006). According to Thrift, we are beginning to see a new mode of capitalist accumulation in which products, media content and experiences are 'co-created' by the passions and enthusiasms of consumers. This is a new mode of production in which persons are trained up to be affectively bound to practices that Thrift attempts to describe as *neuro-aesthetic forethought* - in other words, practices most people would think of as 'creative'. "This 'new distribution of the sensible [...] simultaneously constitutes a living means of generating more and more invention. It is as if someone had found a way to form and then mine a new phenomenological substrate' (Thrift, 2006, 296). Creativity is thus becoming a societal norm, producing subject positions and regulating identities. The association of a 'natural' creativity in certain categories of persons, with an ostensibly natural preference or attraction to flexible, autonomous, working styles (e.g. the rule-breaking, convention flouting creative persona of the artist) can be viewed as an unnatural conjunction of cultural constructs in the service of the reproductive interests of capital (Butler, 2006, 65).

 If creative subjectivities are both an expression and an instrument of neoliberalisation, then the 'creativity explosion' in tertiary education is generating a creative economy as much as the creative economy is generating a creativity explosion. Thinking about the 'co-constitution' (Jessop, 2004) of creative economy and creative subjects has enormous implications for how an instrumentalist tertiary education can be conceived. For one thing it makes it difficult to draw a line between what constitutes 'production', 'consumption', 'commodity', 'the market' or 'innovation'. If a division of labour between producers, distributors and consumers or amateurs and professionals no longer obtains, how are universities to identify (let alone meet) the 'key performance indicators related to their contribution to economic growth' in the form of 'increased economic outcomes for their graduates, creation of business spin-offs, or effective research collaboration with business' as the government recommends (Tertiary Education Commission, 2007)? The point I am making here is the extent to which creative subject positions are discursively formed through the economic imaginaries of the knowledge economy.

For instance, one of the issues that policy discourse about the creative economy has raised for fashion educators in New Zealand is a conflict over what fashion students should be learning. What proportions of a fashion programme should be devoted to developing 'creative' versus 'technical' skills (Jackson & Shaw, 2006, 40)? This distinction between the creative and the technical is integral to debates over fashion curriculum, emerging during the 1990s when

notions about the sign value of commodities (Lash & Urry, 1994) began to inform theories about a 'cultural economy'. Angela McRobbie's (1998) influential *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry* helped to promulgate the orthodoxy now current in knowledge economy literature, that professional creative workers wield special cultural knowledge that 'actively produces new economies' (McRobbie, 1998, 5-6). Political economic research projects continue to support this distinction between a system of fashion as symbolic knowledge and the production of garments as material commodities (cf. Weller, 2003, 115). This binary of 'symbolic' as opposed to 'material' knowledge structures employer's critiques of creative education. For example, a common assumption is that fashion students have been seduced by the glamorous image of the industry, only to have their dreams shattered when they enter the reality of the job market. Thus a scoping study for the Fashion Design Industry carried out under the aegis of the government's Creative Industries development programme declared that

> (s)tudents nowadays are captivated by the desire to be a designer. They have a fixed idea of what this means, and how it could work for them. For many it is a vision of a person somewhere between Rock Star and Artist, designing mainly with a sketchbook and directing a group of able production people' (Blomfield, 2002, 26).

This view was subsequently quoted in a research paper about the changing demand for qualified labour by the New Zealand Trade Consortium and the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, which stated that fashion students

> ...leave three of four year courses in generalist creative studies, sometimes with little operational experience, to find industries in which most people are freelancers, or where permanent jobs for young people are in low-paid support roles. In some cases there is such a large mismatch between the capability and aspirations of the graduates, and the needs of the employers, that potential employers will not even consider such graduates'. (Lattimore, Hawke, Duncan, & Ballingall, 2002).

At a Fashion Industry New Zealand (FINZ) education conference in 2005 the chair of FINZ described creative graduates as 'poor deluded darlings....' who were choosing to be 'impoverished solo designers selling things to their friends' rather than well-paid team members in globally-connected commercial enterprises. Tertiary education also attracted criticism in a FINZ survey of the apparel industry,

...with 65% of those surveyed indicating a high degree of concern that the curriculums (sic) of many fashion schools are not satisfactorily aligned with industry needs and that the system fails to adequately prepare graduates for the realities of the workplace.

"They seem to take a very creative approach to design, but I worry about the lack of commercial grounding. There is a place in the industry for some of these graduates, but not for the numbers currently being produced," says Chrissy Conyngham, who heads Pumpkin Patch's 30-strong design and support team (FINZ, 2005).

So, while education policy discourse promoted the development of 'a broad set of creative skills' in the 'creative knowledge industries' (Ministry of Education, 2002) (albeit in terms so broad as to be practically meaningless) employers pointed out that that a rag trade can't exist on image alone and that students need to be taught other things than being creative (Whittle, 2001). This criticism could not have been brought about by anything qualitatively different about fashion programmes, however, because curricula were much as they always had been. Rather, objections were due to perceptions about the *quantities* of graduates as a waste of tertiary funding while firms still needed to bear the costs of in-house training (Stevens, 1999; Wolf, 2004). What is most interesting in this however, is the way that the distinction between a professional rag trade and 'creative' image industry never existed in New Zealand, either in fashion education, or indeed in the industry, prior to these new ways of speaking, thinking and enacting a creative, knowledge economy and the accompanying government measures to ensure tertiary education paid greater attention to its needs. For example, Lewis et al. (2007, 14) describe how the Exporters Forum at New Zealand Fashion Weeks provide 'a platform for state officials, 'role model' designers and bankers to exhort aspirant designers to eschew romantic visions of design and take on business subjectivities, or take on less glamorous roles such as pattern makers or cutters.' In this way identities are differentially fashioned.

New Zealand tertiary education policy has a reputation for being founded 'on ideology, rhetoric and anecdote' (McLaughlin, 2003), which makes the sector difficult to work in but interesting to research. As a result of the reforms of the last 25 years, New Zealand now has an internationally unique tertiary education system (Mahoney, 2003). It can be regarded as a valuable social laboratory for the international community because it demonstrates that neo-liberal globalisation should not be understood as a hegemonic and homogenous regulatory

regime, but multiple and fractured with many projects at play (Lewis et al., 2007). The debates about creative arts and design in tertiary enrolments illustrate many of these conflicts. For example although design, understood as structured ways of bringing about creative behaviour (Rickards, 1980), has become centrally important to firms in a global environment, the 'creativity explosion' cannot be put down to a functional response to the 'new needs and demands of the nascent knowledge economy' (Friedman, 2003), or to political projects to bring such an economy about. For one thing, when knowledge economy projects began in the early 1990s, this growth in creative enrolments was not foreseen. The term creativity was never mentioned in educational policy until the introduction of the Growth and Innovation Framework for economic development in 2002, well after the increase in enrolments began. As well, the apparel industry is only now beginning to find ways of legitimating 'creative' practices in response to new political projects around design. For example, through engaging with a *Better by Design* programme fashion house *High Society* has been able to accept that 'our designers need time out of the office to gain inspiration – or to do research – and they're not swanning off to have a latte. That's resolved a previously unspoken resentment about what was seen as unnecessary absence'.[iii] Here, creative identities are sutured to fashion designers through discourses and experiences of artistic production.

Thus the changes and growth in creative education in New Zealand can be attributed to a whole raft of projects and processes aimed at the governance of tertiary education. These range from the market-led strategies during the 1990s, which removed the boundaries between academic and non-academic types of programmes, thereby making polytechnic fashion diploma courses practically defunct; to the Tertiary Education Institution charters and profiles that now attempt to guide strategic funding decisions (the impetus for the recent re-branding of many university faculties as 'creative'); to the performance-based funding system for research, which is pushing fashion educators to fit into global academic categories. All these have contributed to the creativity explosion, and subsequently have begun to generate a mode of 'creative' fashion design education that did not previously exist in New Zealand.

Following McRobbie's (1998) work on British fashion design it has become a truism that 'in recent years, fashion departments in academic institutions have favoured theory over hands-on experience and the craft involved in creating a garment' (Duggan, 2001, 254). However, this is not the case in New Zealand, where fashion programmes still tend to resist the incursion of 'theory'[iv] and students are still required to practice the craft of fashion.   It can be argued that the

category of unemployable 'creative' worker that New Zealand employers complain about is actually being produced by the discourses and practices of educational and economic reform for which they are lobbying. This is a clear example of how discourses of reform that arise in specific political contexts cannot be taken as 'merely functional responses to, or legitimations of, already existing economic interests or needs. Rather than simply reflecting a pre-given social world, they themselves actively 'make up' a social reality and create new ways for people to be.' (du Gay, 1996, 53). We need research into the micro politics of this process as a corrective to political economies that leave out the creative actors and suggest that social norms about creativity surface as creative subjectivities through the operation of some invisible social machinery.

So, taking the creativity explosion as an instance of the 'formation and regulation of personal capacities and conducts' (Hunter, 1993, 123) my investigation began to crystallise around two models of subjectification in order to answer the questions: how do individuals find themselves to be creative? What reasons do students 'have in their heads' for enrolling in a creative degree? The first model of subject formation is based on a generalised psychoanalytic theory. In this model, a specific psychologised description of subjectification is taken as a universal process that founds the subjectivity of everyone, in every situation. The second model turns to the material cultural idea of *personhood* in which this generalised theory of the subject is rejected on the grounds that the notion of subjectivity itself has a genealogy and therefore cannot be taken to be the ground of all human capacities (du Gay, 2007).

To follow this argument we need to recognise that 'selves', 'subjects', 'persons' and 'individuals' are not interchangeable terms. Firstly, (Van Wolputte, 2004) usefully refers to 'body-selves', arguing that the body must be understood as a 'relationship', not as the tool for the mind or an empty box, but as the 'material infrastructure' of the production of selves, belonging and identities. As Marcel Mauss realised, individuals are identified and distinguished by the way they use their bodies and these *techniques of the body* (walking, swimming, nose-blowing, breathing, eating, sleeping etc.) require a 'technical education' or an 'apprenticeship' in 'prestigious imitation' (Mauss, 1973 [1934], 71-73).

> It is precisely this notion of the prestige of the person who performs the ordered, authorised, tested action *vis-à-vis* the imitating individual that contains all the social element. The imitative action which follows contains the psychological element and

the biological element. But on the whole, the ensemble, is conditioned by the three elements indissolubly mixed together (Mauss, 1973 [1934], 73-74).

Techniques of the body are 'physio-psycho-sociological assemblages of series of actions. These actions are more or less habitual and more or less ancient in the life of the individual and the history of the society (Mauss, 1973 [1934], 85). So, human capacities such as those contributing to the discrete set of behaviours we understand as creativity are given their definitive form through particular historically contingent regimes of discourses, practices, activities and techniques. Individuals' capacities may vary, but they must learn to locate and conduct themselves as particular sorts of persons through these discourses and practices. Thus a creative person in the arts will display a different 'personality profile' to a creative person in the sciences (cf. Durling, 2003, 6).

The second point to be aware of is that the 'person' is not a given entity. The concept of the person has developed from antiquity and relates to obligations attached to a particular status or role (Hirst & Woolley, 1982,119; Wickham, 1992). 'Persons' can only be understood through the distinct complexes of socio-cultural attributes and statuses though which individuals conduct themselves so that different situations involve the constitution of different types of person. Any given individual might support a number of incommensurate personae that cannot be summed up into a whole. Personhood is therefore dependent upon distinctive arrays of instituted statuses, attributes, rights and duties that organize the practical deportment of individuals. Mauss showed that in some societies 'not all individuals are or have persons. Moreover, those individuals who are or who have persons do not necessarily bear this personhood in an individual manner - that is within themselves' (du Gay, 2007, 52).

These anthropological and historical approaches to studying the formation of persons and their bodily and mental attributes and capacities in distinct instituted cultural settings was also a central theme in Michel Foucault's work on *techniques of the self* (Foucault, 1993). They suggest that the modern western conception of the person as an interiorised entity who understands himself or herself as an individual subject - a self - is a historical and cultural rarity. In other societies and times, persons might have been invested in other kinds of 'trans-individual' institutions, such as mask-wearing rituals or name systems. Du Gay contends that becoming a certain sort of person (his object is the state bureaucrat, public administrator or career civil servant) depends upon 'historically contingent socio-cultural conditions of training

and practice' (du Gay, 2007, 53) and we need to be awake to the consequences of reforming the roles and functions of the offices to which certain personae are attached.

Following this argument, we begin to see how there could be a difference between creative personhood and creative subjectivity:

> the capacity to conduct oneself as the 'subject' of one's thoughts and actions - and indeed the ability to problematize oneself by treating the latter as 'unconscious', hence in need of reflective ethical work, is [...] rooted in particular conducts of life; it is not something that all individuals pursue at all times with equal vigour (du Gay, 2007, 60-61).

If subject formation can be regarded as a historically specific mechanism with its genealogy in specialized ascetic practices and Christian–Platonic cosmography (Hunter, 1993, 127), then a creative subject is a specific type of person with an ability to problematize the self - a person formed through a particular array of socially instituted techniques. It therefore becomes possible to think of non-subjective modes of *creativity,* and this might help to make a way through the problem cited earlier of a disjuncture between employers' demands and policy discourse in relation to creative education.

How might these different models of subjectification apply to students enrolling in a fashion degree? Are they productive as a heuristic device to help understand how a 'creative subjectivity' might emerge?

The first, generalised model of subject formation has been important in studies of visual culture (cf. Hall, 2001; Silverman, 2001). Based on the Lacanian approach to subjectivity and indebted to structuralism (and repeated by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) and Zizek (1994)), the subject is brought into being through the play of conscious and unconscious representations that generate what Knorr Cetina & Bruegger, (2002) have glossed as a 'lack-wanting system'. In the contemporary world, the dynamic of this system, it is 'speculated', is 'maintained by complicated and dispersed machineries of professional image production – of industries that produce movie stars and fashion models, TV programmes and films, shopping catalogues and advertisements' (Knorr Cetina & Bruegger, 2002, 173). To theorists of the modern consumer fashion system, young women have been '*of course* the most clearly trapped in the narcissistic,

self-surveillance world of images' (Featherstone, 1991, 179) (my emphasis). This model of the subject seems superficially consistent with commonsense ideas about fashion students as victims of unrealistic desire, with the consumer fashion system providing the mise-en-scène for 'rock star and artist' fantasies. But subjectification is more complex than simply identifying or enacting attributes and behaviours prescribed by popular culture – it must progress through the phantasmic, enchanted spectacle of fashion via the detour of the unconscious. According to the Lacanian model, as the self negotiates the self-images provided by culture it can never fully recognize itself. It must transmute cultural technologies into ideal representations which it desires but which remain forever beyond its reach. [v] Because of this, the subject is marked by a profound sense of lack, which of itself constitutes subjectivity. Does this model go any way toward explaining the creativity explosion?

Interviews I undertook with first year fashion design students generated a number of themes I had not expected. When questioned about why they chose a fashion, few imputed it to a desire to be creative. They were not interpellated by an ideology of creativity, for reasons that are consistent with criticisms of Althusser's theory[vi]. That is, interpellation as a 'summoning into place' of the subject can't work, because the subject of ideology must always-already be a subject. Students would need to have worked out the symbolic boundaries of creativity *before* being able to be creative subjects. Stuart Hall (1996) points out two important ways through this problem. Firstly, that all that is required of (the concept of) interpellation is that it is enough to set the passage between the Imaginary and the Symbolic in motion. Secondly, that Lacan's point is that the mirror stage is not the beginning of something, but the interruption of something – a loss, a lack, a division from something – and it is this that initiates the process that 'founds' the differentiated subject (and the unconscious). In Lacan's argument the founding of sexually differentiated subject – or in this case the creatively differentiated – is set in motion by this 'dislocating rupture of the look from the place of the Other' (Hall, 1996, 9) which both provides a coherent identity and maintains the irreducible distance which separates the subject from its ideal reflection.   Here is one example of a student describing the passage between the Imaginary and the Symbolic being set in motion by an interpellation.

> *I'd been sewing since I was about 9, and sort of always been making my own clothes, um, but, I mean, there was a point where it wasn't cool to wear, you know, homemade clothes, and it was like, ""gotta have labels", and ... Ahh, but.... I was working in a winery, and just wasn't enjoyable, had a terrible boss, and wasn't*

enjoying the relationship I was in, I was living out of home, and just watching the Fashion TV channel, you know, on SKY at my boyfriend's house, his mum had left it behind when they moved up to Auckland, and just fascinated with that, just always, you know my eyes would sparkle, and (laughs) it just grew stronger, and stronger, and because my parents had just moved up to Auckland. And also I had missed them, and I was like, what am I doing here, this sucks!

My interviews were intended to look for gendered narratives of creative talent and were loosely structured with this in mind. But although I went looking for myths about creativity in order to understand how interpellations 'worked' for these students, the interview material led me in other directions as well. In summary, there was little to suggest students were bent on becoming the 'art stars' (Smith, 2004) that employers complained about. Enrolling in a fashion degree had less to do with a fetishised relation to fashion than with getting a degree-level qualification. It seemed that many students had developed a 'wanting structure' that involved getting 'connected to knowledge' (Smeby, 2007), and that this subject position had more to do with educational 'pathways' and life-long learning, than with creativity.

I concluded that students are not initially interpellated by creativity because the symbolic relations that regulate creativity as a subject position are not reducible to creativity as a normalised social practice (Butler, 2004). Creativity might be a social 'norm' but it is not this norm that students taking up fashion desire to approximate. Rather they desire to enter the symbolic orders of fashion or art or design in tertiary institutions. Or rather their desire is structured by the symbolic order that arranges relations between these categories. In the same way as Judith Butler (2006) argues it is the social category of gender that makes the sex of the body significant, the interviews showed it was the differential categorisation of art/design/fashion that began to make creativity significant.

Yeah, I don't see myself as creative. I actually feel like an odd one out in my class, in my whole year. Because, yeah, I don't feel creative. Other people might see me differently, might feel like that, the odd one out, but definitely, they [creative people] have to be good at art....

When I just say fashion I think of clothes, fashion trends, I think of people just keeping up with the trend. Fashion. But when I say fashion design, its more like you're designing different – you design, but it could be - as soon as you say fashion design, you can be designing clothes, you can be designing fabrics, you can be designing pictures, screen-prints. You can be designing, anything! It's a good word, I think. You know? It automatically makes you sound kind of arty, but not too air-heady. You know, like hippy type - arty. You know what I mean? As soon as you say spatial arts, visual arts, you kind of think of painting, and that kind of [laughs] I don't want to be judgemental! But that's how I feel. And as soon as you say design, graphics, you know, or fashion design, it automatically sounds technical, as well as fun and art.

This brings me to the third point about making a theoretical distinction between individual, person, self, subject. If the individual is the raw human material – the singular body of the human being that forms the 'material infrastructure' for the production of selves and identities (Van Wolputte, 2004), and if personhood represents the individual's experience in distinct instituted socio-cultural settings, so that the 'subject' is a particular type of self-reflective and self-responsible person, the result of the distribution of certain cultural techniques for achieving and monitoring a self - that is, a distinct set of 'technologies of the self' - then a 'creative subject' may be understood as a sub-category of this singular mode of self construction. And following this line of reasoning, it becomes possible to imagine non-subjective modes of inculcating creative personhood. Ironically, some of these might very much resemble old models of vocational training. This has been suggested in a study about the future of apprenticeships in the creative and cultural industries, which recommends that occupations such as 'costume-making are best learnt as situated forms of practice' (Guile & Okumoto, 2007, 565).

However, the paradigm for contemporary creative practice in tertiary institutions is also the process that founds the modern subject, a process that involves 'a grappling deep within the self and within one's relations with others' (Pope, 2005, 11). As Raymond Williams maintained in *Marxism and Literature*, creativity and 'social self-creation' are alike in that they are both practices involving 'struggle at the roots of the mind - not casting off an ideology, or learning phrases about it, but confronting a hegemony in the fibres of the self and in the hard practical substance of effective and continuing relationships' (Pope, 2005, 11). Monitoring the 'fibres of the self' has been one of the main technologies of creative pedagogy throughout the twentieth

century. Learning to become 'creative' has involved this intense hermeneutical processing of the self, through a variety of techniques all designed to encourage representations of the student's own thought about anything and everything. In design schools, these techniques have included the 'sitting-by-Nellie' studio mode of teaching and the one-to-one tutorial under the pastoral ear of the teacher. Work-in-progress is required to be discussed, oral presentations required to be made, workbooks with original drawings required to be presented for critique. Creativity is thus performed by attending to oneself, by analysing and diagnosing one's stories of inspiration, all of which are technologies of the self that produce a specific configuration of creative subjectivity. Few of these practices had been part of New Zealand fashion education before 1996 when the newly formed New Zealand Qualifications Authority accredited the first fashion degrees. These new degrees extended existing vocational programmes to include critical thinking and reflection. They required new individualising teaching and assessment procedures that were closer to those used in arts and humanities programmes. Although it has taken a decade for these changes to bed in, fashion education in New Zealand is now becoming the kind of instituted setting in which individuals might turn themselves into creative subjects:

> to effect, by their own means or the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality (Foucault, 1988, 18).

Creativity can be thought as a type of 'performative knowledge' (Bell, 2006), an act that effectively constitutes 'the doer behind the deed'. It sustains subjectivity as a condition needs to be achieved and re-achieved through the production and repetition of corporeal signs and practices which are made socially and culturally significant through social categories including art, design and fashion. Once creativity can be recognised, in performances that accord with various social expectations of art, technology or fashion, it seems to have existed in the practitioner all along and to have emerged as a natural act that expresses the self. It also becomes an object of governmental rationalities that aim to realise the creative potential of citizens and boost competitiveness in the knowledge economy.

What does creativity look like performed through corporeal regimes other than the technology of a creative arts education? For instance Yuniwa Kawamura's (2006) work on Japanese teens as producers of street fashion describes how charismatic salesgirls in Tokyo's Shibuya district are

hired as designers by teen fashion labels. The cultural capital and 'corporeality' of these girls is not dependent on creative education and perhaps demonstrates what has been called a new labour aristocracy amongst aesthetic workers (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). What are the specific cultural constructs that play a role in forming and regulating their personal conducts and capacities, making up ways for them to be creative?

Both of the approaches outlined here are needed to understand New Zealand fashion education. The psychoanalytically informed account of the self-reflexive formation of creative subjects shows the importance of staging and imaging of the subject and its desire in relation to complex social–symbolic scenarios, including that of a neoliberalised education system (Donald, 1992, 95). In addition, a genealogical interrogation of the creativity explosion focuses on the different strategies and tactics of subjectification that have taken place and been deployed in relation to particular practices of creativity at different moments in relation to the various classifications and differentiations of creative persons. Both positions help to throw some light, firstly on how creative subjectification happens, and secondly, why there currently seem to be more and more creative persons.

Whether creative persons are also subjects of creativity is an interesting problem. The fashion industry wants to specify the limits of the *persona* attached to the roles and functions of commercial fashion design. They deem tertiary graduates 'too creative'. However, the creativity they attribute to students relates to only one specific way in which individuals come to understand themselves as a certain sort of person: that is as the self-expressive, rule-flouting, anti-commercial and technically incompetent young artist, who exists in a constant but impossible state of becoming 'creative'. This is possibly a truth constructed through the discourses of creative economy, which makes imagination into a product, divides symbolic from material knowledge and positions creativity as belonging to the image industry rather than the rag trade. The notion of a creative economy is therefore perhaps a technique for hailing individuals as creative subjects, persons who are affectively bound to 'neuro-aesthetic forethought' and who invest their identity in a 'naturally' creative self. It bears no necessary relation to the specific range of technologies of self that are experienced in all tertiary fashion institutions in all places and at all times. The governors of tertiary education would do well to understand the tensions between the pedagogical strategies and techniques that make up persons with identities that 'work' for the fashion industry, and those that generate subjects for a creative economy.

Endnotes

[i] http://www.tv3.co.nz/VideoBrowseAll/EntertainmentVideo/tabid/312/articleID/38177/Default.aspx#video

[ii] http://deuze.blogspot.com/2007/10/call-special-issue-on-co-creative-labor.html

[iii] http://www.betterbydesign.org.nz/news/HighSocietygets20percentbetterbydesign/

[iv] For example Massey University's honours degree in Fashion still has no core design studies or cultural theory papers.

[v] This is represented Elaine Stone's (2007) recent text for fashion students, *In Fashion: Fun! Fame! Fortune!* An exhortation for students to learn the 'backroom' aspects of the fashion industry is counterposed on every page with large runway images of avant garde and celebrity ideals of fashionability.

[vi] Althusser (2001) based the idea of interpellation on his reading of Lacan's mirror phase - interpellation works because of a mis-recognition through a speculary structure.

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